

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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California Man Convicted of Methamphetamine Conspiracy

(More)

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NEWARK – A jury today convicted a California man of conspiring with several people from New Jersey, including his brother, to distribute and possess with intent to distribute more than 300 grams of methamphetamine, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

Daved Thomson, 44, who at the time of the offense resided in California and worked in marketing for Disneyland, was found guilty of conspiring with his older brother Matthew, of Long Branch, and with Michael Bakhtiar of Leonardo, and Virginia Lopez of Elizabeth, to purchase and distribute approximately one pound of methamphetamine.

All of the co-defendants had previously pleaded guilty and await sentencing. All of them, including Thomson's brother, testified against Thomson at trial.

The trial before U.S. District Judge Katharine S. Hayden began on April 22. The jury deliberated approximately nine hours over two days before returning its verdict against Thomson today.

Judge Hayden scheduled sentencing for Sept. 9. Thomson faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and up to life in prison. Thomson is presently out on bail with electronic monitoring. Judge Hayden has scheduled a bail hearing for tomorrow to determine whether Thomson's release status will change.

Testimony at trial revealed that the conspirators planned to purchase the methamphetamine in California and transport it to New Jersey for eventual distribution. Daved Thomson was paid \$1,500 to introduce his co-conspirators to a methamphetamine dealer in California and facilitate the purchase of the drugs.

Bakhtiar and Lopez then attempted to transport the methamphetamine by rental van all the way from Los Angeles to New Jersey but were pulled over in Junction City, Kansas for a traffic violation. During the traffic stop, Bakhtiar consented to a search of the rental vehicle and the methamphetamine was discovered by police.

Subsequent to their arrest in Kansas, both Bakhtiar and Lopez agreed to cooperate with the DEA. Their cooperation led to the subsequent arrest of Matthew Thomson and Daved Thomson.

The case was tried by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ronald D. Wigler and Ronnell Wilson. The case was investigated by Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer.

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Defense Counsel: Maria D. Noto, Esq., Matawan